

**** EMBARGO – 2PM, WEDNESDAY 30 MARCH 2016 ****

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GRAND CENTRAL AND TAFE QUEENSLAND SOUTH WEST ANNOUNCE KEY PARTNERSHIP

Queensland Treasurer Curtis Pitt today announced a partnership between Grand Central and TAFE Queensland South West to deliver practical, industry-relevant retail and hospitality training in the Toowoomba region.

Eligible local residents will be able to kick-start their career in retail and hospitality with the additional help of funding from Grand Central, which will support training for up to 550 places in retail and hospitality courses.

The initiative coincides with the \$500 million dollar transformation of Grand Central and the influx of approximately 1,000 retail and hospitality jobs the development will bring once completed.

Mr Pitt was in Toowoomba today to launch the partnership between Grand Central and TAFE Queensland South West, and inspect the site of the Grand Central development within the heart of the city's burgeoning CBD.

"The \$500 million transformation of Grand Central by QIC is a project of world-class standard that demonstrates the growth and progress of Toowoomba and the surrounding region, and will make a significant and enduring contribution to its economic vitality," Mr Pitt said.

"This is a fantastic local partnership executed between Grand Central and TAFE Queensland South West, which seeks to make a tangible contribution in assisting local residents of Toowoomba to enhance and hone their skills in hospitality and retail.

"It's a great example of a commercial organisation working together with a government funded training provider to assist residents of Toowoomba to get job ready and share in the opportunity the \$500 million development of Grand Central will bring to this key regional hub."

Centre Manager of Grand Central, Shaine Beveridge, said the Centre was excited to invest in helping upskill local residents in preparation for the many new retail and hospitality jobs being created as part of the redevelopment.

"As a major centre for local employment, and the region's unrivalled community destination, Grand Central is committed to creating opportunities to enhance the city's ongoing evolution and growth," said Mr Beveridge.

"Today's announcement represents a significant investment in skilling local residents to boost their employment prospects – whether that be at Grand Central or at another retail or hospitality business in Toowoomba.

"Grand Central has been operating in Toowoomba for 19 years, and we very much feel like part of the community, so we are proud this partnership will provide an opportunity to make a further contribution to the future of Toowoomba, beyond the stunning transformation the centre is undergoing."

TAFE Queensland South West Director, Corporate Solutions Michele Berkhout said the team was delighted to be part of this community initiative which will help locals gain in-demand skills and develop their careers.

"This contribution from Grand Central towards training costs will allow many students to complete a qualification who might not otherwise have the opportunity," said Ms Berkhout.

"Gaining a qualification in retail or hospitality will help residents of the Toowoomba region gain an edge when applying for jobs, open up pathways to further study, and provide exciting career opportunities.

"I encourage anyone looking to enter the industry or upgrade their current skills to take advantage of this great opportunity."

The first courses supported by Grand Central contributions start from 11 April, 2016. Eligibility conditions apply.

To enrol contact TAFE Queensland South West on 1300 914 754 or visit www.tafesouthwest.edu.au

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MEDIA RELEASE



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